

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

May 3, 2005

7:00 PM

In the absence of the Mayor, Chairman Shea called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Roy, Gatsas, Guinta, Sysyn, Porter, O'Neil, Lopez,
Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault and Forest

Absent: Alderman Osborne

Chairman Shea advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Chairman Shea requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Joe Levasseur, 866 Elm Street, Manchester stated:

Good evening. I am not used to sitting here at a public meeting without Mayor Baines sitting here. I was really going to put my thoughts towards the Mayor. I notice the Mayor has been out pontificating how great the City is going and how wonderful the City is doing and I can say for the civic center and the Airport, the two gems of the City, I would agree that those two great enterprises are doing terrific but I have been very disappointed about the news coming out of the baseball stadium. I have had a lot of people who come in to my restaurant on Elm Street complaining about the parking situation and that they aren't able to get there and they have to park far away from the baseball park. Overall I have been very displeased at how it was ramrodded down the taxpayer's throat. I was very disturbed to see today that the value of the condos is going to come down. I guess Chinburg the builder is seeing that the original price, I think Alderman Porter brought it out that the value of that property has dropped quite a bit from what it was projected to bring in from a tax base. Again, I am getting a little more worried as we go along. The bad news coming out of Hackett Hill. I wish you guys would have listened to Ted Gatsas and a couple of others and gone with the original party that would have brought in those jobs. I am just a little bit disappointed in the way things have been going in the City. I would like to support Alderman Shea on his vote the other day for the bridge across the Merrimack. I do think

that is a waste of taxpayer's money and I was glad to see, Alderman Shea, that you brought out the actual cost to the taxpayers. I don't think we got a lot of straight answers. I remember when it came in front of me as a Board member that it was supposed to come out of federal money and private money and there was finally an admission by the Mayor last week that it will be \$1 million out of our own tax money. I don't think that is a necessary thing that we should be spending money on. I am also very disappointed in the fact that you guys went forward and voted for the \$100 million expansion of the schools. I also worried and wondered and begged and pleaded for you guys to hold off because I really thought that Bedford would end up building their own school. Sure enough Bedford has built their own school – 800 students out of the bubble that was told to me by Bob MacKenzie when I was a freshman was going to burst in 2006. Now 2006 is around the corner and we are not going to have that problem with students in the schools. I think we have wasted and spent a lot of money and this is the year when the budget is going to be looked at a lot closer, an election year, and I am hoping that this would be finally a year when we would be able to get, not a tax increase, but at least a tax rebate. That is all I have to say and I want to congratulate you all for doing all of the hard work that you do.

Keith Hirschmann, 296 Dunbarton Road, Manchester stated:

I am an average citizen and taxpayer. Chairman of the Board Shea, it is great to see you up there running the meeting. You got your due. Congratulations. To the rest of the Board the reason I came tonight was in reading the newspaper this week on how the School Administrative Unit really wants to go off on their own and lease space is troubling to probably me and a lot of the regular folk in Manchester. For a long time we have owned our own buildings in government. We have always owned our own buildings – school buildings, municipal buildings and this new trend of going out and leasing space troubles me as a taxpayer and probably troubles most of the other taxpayers in our community. If there are some expenses at the Ash School with plowing or whatnot...I mean the City does the plowing so they are paying you. I wouldn't want to see them go out and pay someone else for the services and actually become a tenant. It doesn't sound good as a taxpayer to have a School Administrative Unit...and as a State Representative it troubles me even more that in one of the most troubling times of putting a budget together that the School Administrative Unit and the administrators would seek to spend the adequacy grant that is coming to Manchester on something as luxurious as new space for themselves at a time when education dollars are hard to come by, school space is what is needed for the students, books, teacher's salaries, that is what the taxpayers are concerned with, not for administrators to have a new luxurious space. If they cannot stay at the Ash Street School then they as a body should look at West High, which will have thousands of square feet extra because of Bedford exiting the building within a short period of time. I would say please pass the message to the Chairman of the School Board, Mayor Baines, to take the lead and don't let this happen. Don't waste taxpayer's dollars on something like administrative space. The leaders up at the State House have really fought hard to put a budget together and they have had to commit capital reserve funds, increase cigarette taxes

and do all kinds of unsortly things to get a budget to get adequacy grant funds to the City of Manchester and to see them squandered on things such as administration is very troubling to the taxpayer. I hope you would all take an empathetic ear towards that. Just on a small note watching the pennies, Alderman O'Neil you know that I am in the fire alarm business and most fire alarms in Manchester have a strobe light in front of their building if a fire happened so I am hoping that the proposal that Alderman Osborne put forth for \$22,000 for strobe lights on Elm Street doesn't go forward because it doesn't sound like something that is viable. When there is a strobe light going off on Elm Street people tend to call the Fire Department. I think someone should think that one through and not spend the money. Please watch our pocketbooks. We are all anticipating a tax increase again this year and we are hoping it doesn't happen.

Harold Levine, 49 Hillcroft Road, Manchester stated:

One of the reasons I did come tonight and I am surprised more of the taxpayers haven't in the last two weeks but I came here mainly to direct my remarks to the Mayor who is also Chairman of the School Board on what the School Board wants to do to our tax dollars. It seems that they have adequate space in a building that the City owns but they want to go out and rent a dilapidated building that the taxpayers are going to be asked to refurbish before they can move in. I can't believe this is the only building in the Millyard that was able to get away with paying no taxes. It seems this is the way Mr. Kamen operates. As soon as he has tenants he has somebody who will fix up the building maybe...well there is no reason, I don't know where the School Department can come up with the money to pay rent and fix this dilapidated building up. Many years ago, the last administration...that building at one time was given to the City of Manchester for nothing. The last administration said "we don't think it will be good for offices because there was a health hazard." I haven't seen in the paper yet that the Finance Officer from the School Board did any checking on whether the Health Department has given it a clean bill of health or what but I say and I have spoken to some Aldermen last week that you people appropriate the money and the School Board has their discretion on how to spend it. I think you finally have to put the hammer down because it seems that if they are able to rent that building it will be another deal like happened with Mr. Kamen many years ago at 200 Bedford Street that the taxpayers or the Board and the ex Mayor floated a bond for \$2.1 or \$2.3 million that the citizens of Manchester are paying off and he owns that building until the year 2013 when it is paid off. Please ladies and gentlemen of the Aldermanic Board let's use some discretion and think of the taxpayers and finally put our foot down on the Mayor who is also Chairman of the School Board and see if there is a way you can direct the dollars for education rather than feeding somebody else's pocket.

Robin Comstock, 889 Elm Street, Manchester stated:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you this evening. I am inviting you to a reception scheduled for May 12 at St. Anselm's College. The reception is to bring together all of the Selectmen, Aldermen and Council Members from each of the

communities that we serve. While I wrap up my comments I would like to tell you a little bit more about the reception and I hope that you will attend. I have a brochure about the event. A couple of years ago the Chamber of Commerce identified regional citizenship or regional thinking as an important strategic initiative and an approach that should overlay all of our work. Eighteen months ago we recognized that in order to be a true regional Chamber we need to be more regional in our approach to economic development. At the same time the NH Division of Economic Development was also looking for ways to cooperate more extensively in regions throughout the state and see more cooperative efforts occur between communities and regions that they are representing as well. With that, with some more goals the two organizations, the state office of DRED and the Chamber of Commerce, co-hosted the first Regional Economic Development Round Table. Participants included town administrators, managers, planners, economic development practitioners, and a few elected officials and volunteers from the private sector, including many business leaders and more. Since then, this initiative has grown to take on numerous stakeholders, which include 13 different communities in the Greater Manchester service area, all who have agreed in theory that each community has something to offer the other and it is to each community's benefit to be collaborate and cooperative between one another. We have had several meetings since then and I won't bore you with the details unless you would like to talk about them further but most noticeably at the closing of our third round table discussion, which has grown to over 30 regional practitioners and economic developers attending, we agreed that we needed to have a strategic planning session, which we did embark upon. At that planning session we identified a mission statement, a brand identity for the entire region and we thought we would hold a municipal leadership forum, which is this event on May 12 that again I hope you will be able to attend. Individual communities, we think, can benefit greatly by promoting our regional assets. Each community can benefit from that effort. With a newly established brand identity we believe that we can promote the Greater Manchester region pertaining to existing businesses and grow our young professional population, which will attract even more business to the area and broaden the tax base. We recognize that we have many assets in our own community, our community of Manchester and we think that there are other assets as well as other interests and efforts that affect Manchester and our interests and efforts affect those other communities. Without belaboring the point, I very much hope that you will be able to attend. Selectmen from at least nine communities that we have made presentations to over the course of the last month will be attending, as well as members of the Chambers Board of Directors. As we all know, Manchester is the hub of the region, perhaps even the hub of the state and certainly the leader of economic development. We think it is the economic development engine of the State of New Hampshire and your voice and the relationships that you establish with your colleagues who are also elected officials we think will benefit us all. Thank you for listening. I do have the invitation. If any of you have any questions at all don't hesitate to contact me in any manner that works for you.

D.J. Murphy, PO Box 10143, Bedford stated:

I am sorry to see that the Mayor isn't here tonight. I reside in Ward 3 in the City of Manchester. I came here to talk about City debt loading. Recently we bonded the Verizon Center and the Fisher Cats ballpark. There was some total of the amount of financial risk on both enterprises somewhere between \$55 and \$70 million. Does anybody know? The point is in the case of a failing economy either one of these enterprises are considered luxury items. If you have enough money left over you can go and buy a ticket to go to a ballgame or concert or whatever is being offered. I was listening to the Charlie Sherman show on the radio on WGIR. In the past couple of weeks the illustrious Mayor had visited a foreign country and came back on a Sunday night and appeared on the show. By telephone he made an announcement about the future of Manchester and said we will continue doing what we are doing, whatever that means. Yesterday morning the Mayor was on the radio show again and he was talking about the City purchasing a building. I believe the building is called the AutoDesk building. Maybe or maybe not. Maybe I didn't catch it because it was fairly early in the morning. He wants the City to purchase the AutoDesk building because of what he refers to as it is more cost effective. More cost effective. Well I don't know what definition of the AutoDesk building he is relating to cost effective. Now I want to swing the responsibility of the City and make it clear that Catholic Medical Center has published in its quarterly report its balance sheet. I noticed that they are in excess of \$400 million, yes that is \$400 million. I don't know what the responsibility of the City is but that is why I am bringing it up. I don't know if the City is responsible for Catholic Medical Center's financial affairs. What happened was...the asterisk is that the balance sheet will balance. As long as the \$400+ million that is owed to the Catholic Medical Center from Medicare and Medicaid, one or the other or both combined, it is not clear, is paid to them then the balance sheet will balance. I just want to bring that to light in terms of whether or not the City has a responsibility. Since there are 110,000 residents here I think you ought to swing your attention and focus away from the AutoDesk building and let's take a look at the situation over at Catholic Medical Center.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Forest, duly seconded by Alderman Lopez it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented and on motion of Alderman Porter, duly seconded by Alderman Roy it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk